

# Making learning effective

LEARNING becomes more constructive and fruitful when lecturers incorporate real-world challenges and industry expectations based on their experiences, according to students and graduates.

Kiritaran Gunasegran, 23, said a lecturer with such experiences is able to better articulate theories and effectively relate them to actual practice.

During his time as an undergraduate at Taylor's University, such lecturers helped improve his understanding on the subjects.

"It allowed me to grasp in detail a theory's limitations and its applicability to the challenges out there.

"It's more effective because it improves our understanding of the subject matter and exposes us to the working world.

"As students, we can then think of more innovative ideas that can be catered to the industry. Our solutions will be real and practical — we no longer propose ideas that revolve around assumptions and theoretical limitations," said the Kiritaran, who recently graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering.

When a lecturer dives into their own industrial experiences, they present real life scenarios and challenges they went through, he added.

Recalling how his lecturer once shared about the difficulty in colour matching between the accessories of a car and the body of the car itself, he said it helped his class understand the challenges that come with using the naked eye to do colour matching work.

"He also shared with us how this challenge is addressed in the automobile manufacturing industry.

"Someone who has not been in the industry would not have been able to present this point of view and it is an important thought process to share with aspiring mechanical engineers."

As a graphic design student, UCSI University student Hong Li, 22, said it is an advantage to learn from lecturers with rich industry experience.

Her lecturers gave insights on how the creative industry works and presented real-life challenges faced by working designers.

"They'd also teach us how to implement the theory part of our subjects into practical use such as design thinking, creative and critical thinking, as well as marketing strategies and segmentation.

"I found it effective as we indirectly gain exposure from the industry. These lecturers are able to guide and prepare us for our journey into the working environment and to be capable employees.

"I had a lecturer who emphasised the importance of designers being multi-skilled and able to constantly adapt to technological changes. This will set us apart from others in a competitive hiring environment," said Hong, who recently completed her Graphic Design degree.

Thanks to her lecturers' practical input, Hong who is already working now, engages effectively with her clients, and is able to understand their needs and wants better.

National swimmer Lim Kit Sern, 23, had a lecturer who worked in a brokerage firm before venturing into academia.

This, the third year Finance and Investment student said, was a plus point as his lecturer had first hand knowledge of investment in stocks and charting, hence teaching them the tips and tricks before entering the stock market.

"We also had the experience of trading using a virtual account.

"It was useful and practical knowledge which I can utilise to sharpen my skills with. This is something that will add to my credentials when I embark on my future career path."

Kit Sern, however, said that it is up to a lecturer if they were willing to share additional knowledge with students.

There is no added value if lecturers with rich experiences do not transfer that knowledge to students.

Mohammad Arif Ramly's lecturers compare what they teach during lessons with what is happening in the industry.

As lessons are more theory-based, comparisons to the industry's needs, expectations and challenges help a student see how the theory can be applied practically, he added.

"It makes the class more interesting and it grabs our attention and focus. I believe that learning from other people's experiences is better as it prepares students before they join the industry," said the third year Universiti Putra Malaysia Bachelor of Agriculture Science student.

Lecturers with field experiences, he said, tend to evaluate them based on their understanding of the subject, problem solving skill and theory application in real-life situations.

Their focus is not just on the examination and assessment results, and their classroom lessons are more effective and engaging, Mohammad Arif added.